

Mr. Chairman, I have been disappointed as a Member of this body to discover that, unlike most other Federal agencies, unlike what we have done for thousands of employees in private corporations around America, that we are unable to extend a transit benefit to our employees. It has been Federal policy since the early 1990s that we encourage this balanced approach to transportation. It has been occurring in the Senate since 1992.

I was pleased when I found that the Committee on Appropriations had added the provisions of House Resolution 37 that would have extended this program that were amended into the bill. Evidently there may be some procedural problem or point of order that is raised that would pull this item from the bill.

I would hope that it would be possible for the House leadership to come together to make sure that we ultimately have provisions that have already been supported by over 230 Members of the House that have cosponsored the legislation. I would hope that at a time when we are talking about spending billions of dollars to try and somehow resuscitate the Washington, D.C., area and to fight the congestion in the second-most congested area in the United States, I would hope that we would be able to adopt this simple program that is already available to most of the employees on the Hill, because it is good for the environment, because it is good for reducing congestion, but, most important, because it extends an important benefit to some of our lowest-paid employees who want to do the right thing.

Mr. Chairman, I would hope that my colleagues would join with me, in the event it is not part of this proposal, that we could make sure that this is fixed before we adjourn for the year.